

Decision memo (1 of 2): EC 2012-06-002, Conference Sponsorship and Attendance

Summary: The Executive Council met on June 25, 2012 and evaluated proposals presented regarding revisions to policies and practices regarding NASA conference sponsorship and attendance. While NASA had a robust set of reporting policies and processes prior to FY12, these did not address concerns raised in recent OIG audits and OMB Memorandum 11-35, "Eliminating Excess Conference Spending and Promoting Efficiency in Government." Under the leadership of NASA's Deputy Administrator and CFO, NASA improved key aspects of its conference planning processes during FY 2012, and realized better management visibility and significant savings in connection with conference expenditures. Options for improving NASA's processes were also developed and steps for implementing these identified, so NASA could move towards the required OMB certification of its conference controls.

Expanding on and reemphasizing the requirements of OMB M-11-35, OMB also issued Memorandum 12-12 in May. Together M-11-35 and 12-12 require new policies and practices for conference sponsorship and attendance to ensure that Federal funds are used appropriately on these activities and that agencies continue to reduce spending on conferences where practicable. To accomplish this and strengthen NASA's conference sponsorship and attendance policies, practices, approvals, controls and reporting, eight issue areas and related proposals (highlighted in the EC Decision package) were developed and socialized with the SMC at their recent meeting and with the HQ Officials in Charge, and the CFO and RMO communities via two VITS and various telecons.

The Executive Council made the decision after consultation by the recommender with the following stakeholders, and several others, based on the data and analyses appended.






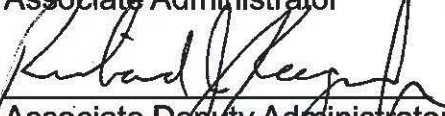

List Consulted Stakeholders: Strategic Management Council (SMC) members

Decision

Based on this Executive Council's review, the Executive Council decided to adopt the changes to policies and practices outlined within to ensure that NASA's sponsorship and attendance at conferences provides maximum value for the use of taxpayer funds, with following exceptions:

- BPR will be the forum for periodic management reports, including submitted NF1784 in policy on reporting forms
- 25% variance from estimated conference cost on NF1784 (substituting for 10%) in policy on approving
- Make clear that NF1784 cost estimates should be revised after initial submission
- Minimize planning trips, but allow exception process with OIC approval

Concurrence that this decision was reached in compliance with Executive Council procedures:

 Administrator	 Associate Administrator	 Chief Financial Officer	 Chief Technologist
 Deputy Administrator	 Associate Deputy Administrator	 Chief Scientist	

Decision memo (2 of 2): EC 2012-06-002, Conference Sponsorship and Attendance

Decision execution responsibility	Accountable for:
Chief Financial Officer, Dr. Elizabeth Robinson	Revision and issuance of related interim and final financial management policy and related forms
OCFO	Revisions to NASA Conference Tracking System (NCTS) and related reporting
OCFO and OP	Develop guidance for conference support procurements
OCFO, OP and OGC	Develop conference planning guidance

Execution milestone	Milestone Date	Responsible Party
Publication of related interim/final financial management policy (in NPR 9700 series and related forms)	Interim - August 31, 2012 Final – December 31, 2012	Chief Financial Officer, Dr. Elizabeth Robinson
Revised NASA Conference Tracking System (NCTS) go-live	TBD	OCFO
Publication of guidance on conference support procurements	TBD	OCFO and OP
Publication of conference planning guidance	TBD	OCFO, OP and OGC
Publish Communication Plan for execution	Initial Output, July 2012	CoS (lead) in collaboration with OCFO, OHCM and OC